

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, February 19. 1708.

I Have been telling you the Injury to Trade by Prohibitions and Restrictions; I touch'd at the *Flanders* Prohibition, and I did purpose to come to our new-fashion'd Way of prohibiting Commerce in Cases of War, and so directly to our present Prohibition of the *French* Trade, by which, as in the first Part of this Work, I have prov'd, we lose out of Pocket 500000*l.* per Annum, and so fight against our selves in making War with our Enemies— A Thing, the Wisdom of our Neighbours consider'd of in Time, and took care to remedy it, and I was in Hopes we should have been instructed by our Losses before now, to have been equally prudent.

But I love to go on, in order we may farther see the Inconveniencies of our Prohibitions in Trade, by the daily Applica-

tion of our People to the Parliament to redress them; one of which is now particularly depending before the H... of L... and may perhaps meet with its Decision this very Day; I mean the Affair of exporting White-Cloths.

I know, it is alledg'd, that Exporting our Cloths unmanufactur'd, is robbing us of the Labour of the Poor; a Thing in all our Discourses of Manufacturing principally to be consider'd, as what lies at the Bottom, and is the Soul of our Welfare in Trade— But most of our general Rules admit some Exception, and this among the rest, one very considerable One, as to White Cloths.

The Dyers are originally the Complainers in such a Case, together with some of the Workmen employ'd in dressing or finishing the Cloths; and these say, they are depriv'd

priv'd of their Work, or at least in a great Measure discourag'd— But here it is to be ask'd,

Gloucestershire and Wiltshire People making Cloth.

1. Do not some People in foreign Parts dye the Cloth better and cheaper than you can do? If they do, you cannot wonder that they refuse to have them of our Dying: Now 'tis the well and cheap Performance which forces a Manufacture or Trade, and Prohibitions cannot alter it. Do the *Dutch* refuse our Cloths dy'd, because they dye them better and cheaper themselves? Let our Dyers so improve their Art as to out-do them, and dye them better and cheaper than the *Dutch*, and instead of taking none dy'd, in time they will come to take none white; and if you by ill dying render your Manufacture unmarketable, as it seems it is, when it comes to lye by their own; Can any Body wonder or blame the *Dutch* for refusing them? 'Tis plain, they do not refuse your Cloth, but your Dyers, and it would be hard, that because your Dyers are Bunglers at their Trade, you should support them at the Expence of your whole Manufacture.

2. But here is another Clause unhappily concern'd in this Affair, which makes it absolutely ridiculous, and that is, that a great Deal of this Cloth is carry'd up rough and undress'd into *Germany* and *France*, and several Parts of *Europe*, where it is worn white and rough, and never dress'd or dy'd at all.—And this is manifest in the Articles of *Sur-Tout* Coats in *Germany*, especially for Servants and poor People, Cloathing Armies and Monastick Habits of the Religious Houses; now if we will let none of our Cloths go out white or undress'd, what is this but to make an Act of Parliament, that the *Fryers* shall change their Habits, or shall not be clothed with *English* Cloth; that the *Prussian Sur-Touts* and the *Saxon Horse* shall cloth with no more *Wiltshire Whites*, and the *English* of this is, that we are barring out other Nations from our Trade, and prohibiting our

This is so plain, and has been made out so clearly, that the Wisdom of the Nation has most seasonably taken it into Consideration, and nothing has been more surprizing to me, than that any Body should appear to oppose an Act of so visible Advantage to the Nation.

Nor has this been a new Thing in *England*, we are perhaps one of the best Nations in the World to make Laws that do us no good, and neglect those that are for our good when they are made; an Enquiry into either of which Articles would be the keenest Satyr, any Man in the World could write upon our Country.

I should say a great Deal more to this Affair of the White Cloth, but I hope, the Bill for its Expostation being at the Point of passing, there will be the less Occasion—I could easily make Calculations upon the Multitude of People it employs; the vast Extent of Country, and some of it the richest in *England*, which depends upon it; the whole *Western Part* of *England*, from *Salisbury* to *Gloucester*, are in some Measure to be said to live by it; the great and populous *Vales*, numberless Villages and wealthy Towns, which are in the Trade of Land where this Trade lies, are hardly to be match'd in the Nation, and all, by this senseless Interruption of Trade, are at a full Stop, and their Cloth lies by without a Market; wealthy Clothiers have their whole Stocks and Estates in Trade lying on their Hands in Goods. These Goods want no Demand, want no Vent, Foreigners want them, almost as much as we want to sell them, and our Officers having found out by their mighty Wisdom a Law of Prohibition, we will not let them be carry'd to the Market to be sold.

Were this at a Time, when we had a free and open Trade with all the World beside, and that our People, generally speaking, were full of Trade, the Grievance would make the less Noise, but when it falls at a Time, when we suffer innumerable Plagues and Convulsions in the other Parts of our Trade, it is doubly unhappy, and adds

to the Complication of Disasters we now struggle with— But as violent Diseases prompt the Remedy, I hope, this is near its Cure, and I do not mention it here to

discourage us—but to make out what I am upon, *viz.* The Mischief, generally speaking, of our Prohibitions in Trade.

MISCELLANEA.

WELL, Gentlemen, and what think you of my Garbling-Office now? And let us for a while suppose them in full Commission sitting at the Work, and who shall we bring before them?—Will you begin at the Original of all our Mischiefs? *And that, I think, is the only Way to render the Work complete:* And where lies the Original of our Mischief, for that will admit Dispute? Truly, not so much in Who is in, and Who out, as in a Spirit of Strife, Ambition and separate Interest, that runs through the whole Nation at this Time.

Now, could we garble this Temper, and restore the Ancient Roman Principle again in Britain; the Principle of dying for our Country, or in English, serving our Country, this would be a Work indeed; but there is so much Mixture to be garbled out before this can be done, that 'tis like the Proposal in the Gospel, of *weeding out the Tares while the Wheat was standing, which would have certainly pull'd up all the Wheat with it.*

Shall we bring Parties to this Garbling-Office, and how would the very Name of Parties be lost in their Hands, when they should pick out all their Passion, all the Cynders of a burnt-up Gall, and the Dust of a Brain calcin'd by the furious Flame of Envy and Ambition—When the Garblers come to separate between gilded Pretences, a *Commodity that looks fair, but is foul and unmerchantable within*, and real Designs which lie hid under the Out-side Sham of State Policy.

And to begin with the hot Party we have talk'd so much of, will you garble out their unmarketable Ware, their corrupted Principles of Persecution and Passive-Obedience? Their SOIL, as the Spice Merchants call it, that is, the Dirt of Scandal,

Railery, Calmure and Reproach, which lies on the Surface of all their Actions? Will you garble them of all their Revolution-Uncleanesses, their Abjuration-Defilements, where they have fought against their Monarch, and yet pray for his Return, abjur'd his Race, and yet espouse their Quarrel? Will you garble them of all their ill-natur'd Mirth at their Countries Misfortunes, and their awkward unnatural Smiles when our Enemies triumph? Will you pick out their forging of Sham-News, their plotting assassinating Mixtures, their Memorial, Tacking, Anti-Union Corruptions? Heavens bless us from meeting the Spectre in a dark Night, what a Skeleton would a *High-Flyer* thus garbled look like!

Well, and must not the Whigs be garbled too? Ay, ay, Gentlemen, garble us and welcome, and if you can get out all our Kn—s, nay, go farther if you can, and get out all our unmarketable Ware, such as Narrowness of Principle, our sneaking, censoring, ill-rewarding, Friend-neglecting, Service-forgetting, King-abusing Principles, do it and welcome; ay, ay, garble out all our Time-Servers, Makecontenters and Sham-Whigs, and you will do us a Favour; we shall be the fitter to hold our own against *High Flying* Invasions, and govern Tories with more Authority.

But before I go on with this ill-natur'd Allegory, let us see, who are fittest to be the Garblers; for unless you can fix upon that, we shall go together by the Hair at the Beginning, and so never finish the Work. I remember a Story in the late King William's Time, of a poor Fellow that was try'd for setting the Ship, call'd the *Royal Sovereign*, on Fire; the Thing, it seems, was an Accident, however the poor Fellow was hang'd for it, to teach him to take

take more Heed another Time, or to teach
other Folks, 'tis the same thing: If I remem-
ber right, the Fellow was Cook of the Ship.
—And being a true Tarr, i. e. one that
could jest even with the Gallows, he left us
a Story very improvable.

A little before he had his Sentence, he
tells one of the Officers that come to see
him, that he had not fair Play for his Life,
for he was not try'd by a fair Jury—Why so,
Jack, says the Officer? Why I am not try'd as
other People are, says he. How is that, says
the Officer? Why, says he, if a Captain com-
mits a Crime, and is to be try'd for it, he
is try'd by a Jury of Captains, meaning the
Council of War, and so he is sure to come
off; but if a Jury of Captains come to try
a poor Cook, he will be sure to be hang'd;
therefore I ought to have had a Jury of
Cooks: For if the Captains are to try us,
all the Cooks in the Fleet will be hang'd;
but let us have a Jury of Cooks, and we
will take Care of one another as they do.

The Moral of the Story is to my Purpose;
if honest Men are not set to garble us,
we shall have the Wheat pull'd up, and not
the Tares; what is the Reason our Clergy
do not preach down Vice, and our Justices
punish Immoralities? The Case is plain,
they are ill Garblers, for they are of the
SOIL themselves, not of the Spice; let
them to garble, and they will throw out the
Spice, not the Mixture.

Well, what do you think of a new Sort
of Garblers? They say, the *French* are a
coming to garble us all; I dare say, the
French will look twice, before they take that
Leap once; and notwithstanding our Weak-
ness, which one Party among us are fond
of descanting upon, notwithstanding the
Absence of a great Part of our Fleet, the
French are too wise to come hither, they
know the Difficulty of getting back again,
too well to think of it— They may land
anywhere, and do Mischief they certainly
will, wherever they come; but unless they
continue Masters of the Sea, and cannot
be fought with in a great while, which is
not at all probable, they must find it a nice

Piece of Work to return again, and may
experience *Virgil's* well-known Caution,

————— *Facile est decensus Avernii,*
Sed revocare gradum —————
Hoc Opus, hic Labor est —————

English'd very well by one of our Poets.

'Tis easy into Hell to fall,
But to get back from thence is all.

Therefore I would advise the Gentlemen
of the Party not to flatter themselves with
the Hopes of the *French* coming hither to
garble us; I dare say, they will have
more Wit, and I hope more Work too.
But I shall have Occasion to speak to this
Matter more in earnest in my next.

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